

November 19, 1985 by TheLadyBlakeney

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Ensemble Fic, Gen, Minor Swearing, brief period-typical homophobic language, don't take any of the relationships too seriously, everyone has a nice day, that's it that's the fic, they're pretty chill

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Summary:

The air was crisp on November 19, 1985. So crisp that it got stuck in the back of your throat as you breathed it in and you had to cough just a little bit. The road was empty, and there was only the sound of the woods in the distance. Which was perfect for Jane.

or, that time that literally everyone just had a really nice day

November 19, 1985

Author's Note:

this is saved as "EVERYONE'S HAPPY" lol

this takes place roughly a year after the events of season 2. i don't even touch the mind flayer showing up.

the concept of this fic is that literally everybody has a nice day. that's it, that's the fic. enjoy

The air was crisp on November 19, 1985. So crisp that it got stuck in the back of your throat as you breathed it in and you had to cough just a little bit.

The road was empty, and there was only the sound of the woods in the distance.

Which was perfect for Jane.

Her curly hair was now falling to her shoulders, and a little past them, too, which was kind of confusing for her. She'd never had her hair this long. There was just enough of a breeze to blow her hair repeatedly into her face.

"You're such an idiot, Dustin."

The corners of Jane's mouth quirked up into a smile.

In the distance, the sound of the Party grew louder. Gradually, they appeared on the horizon, all of them on their bikes, even Max, who was arguing with Dustin over whether or not Superman III had been awful.

Jane's eyes remained on Mike as he dismounted his bike haphazardly to scoop her into a hug, still with a pause before it.

Jane liked these long pauses. She liked looking into Mike's eyes.

“El!”

She pulled away from Mike to hug Lucas, who looked like he couldn't stop smiling. When she pulled away from him, she looked at Max, who shyly, no, not quite - uncertainly extended her hand. Jane reached out to shake the other girl's hand and there was a moment of wordless agreement between the two girls.

Friends .

“Eleven!”

And then there was Dustin, eternally cheerful, who pulled her into a bone-crushing hug and she smiled even more.

“Jane.”

Will Byers, small and kind as always. She hugged him possibly the longest. He knew the Upside Down just like she did. After last year, he was able to see into it and the Void, just like she did. They'd met there often.

“Jane?”

It was Mike who said it, but when she turned back to the others they were all looking at her.

She nodded. “Jane. My name.”

There was a moment until Dustin said, “So your name is Jane now?”

Jane nodded.

“Awesome.”

The group began chattering away again, Dustin and Max resuming their argument as Will and Lucas, bemused, fell into step together to talk about the latest science project that was sort of extra credit and sort of just for fun.

“So Hopper said you're coming to the high school after the winter break,” Mike said, sounding like he was trying to be casual,

but failing.

“Yes.”

“You’re going to really like it at school, El - Jane.”

She looked at him and smiled. “Yes.”

“Hey, guys!”

Dustin was calling to them, followed by an irritated looking Max and Lucas and a neutral Will.

“It’s freezing out here,” Lucas said with a roll of his eyes.

“You’re only saying that because your girlfriend’s from California.”

“No, I’m saying that because it’s freezing outside,” Lucas said as Max flipped Mike off.

“The point is - ” Dustin loudly interjected. “The Wheeler house. Basement. Nancy’s out with Jonathan and Mike’s mom is doing mom things with her mom friends. Plus, Mike’s dad is so out of it he won’t even look at Jane.”

“Hot chocolate,” Will added.

Mike turned to Jane and she nodded back at him.

He shrugged. “Okay, let’s go.”

The bell rang just as Jonathan had ducked down to grab more of the junk that they kept near the registers for last-minute purchases. Granola bars and stuff.

“Be with you in a moment,” he called out to whoever it was. He’d learned early on that it wasn’t really worth it to immediately drop everything to help a customer.

He rounded the corner to find a smirking Nancy Wheeler brandishing a Polaroid camera.

Click .

The photograph began printing and Nancy gently took it in her hands.

“Huh. How about that. I’m a great photographer.”

“Oh, yeah?” he asked with his eyebrows slightly raised.

“Yeah. This is part of my latest series, *Local Boy And His Granola Bars*.”

“Mmm. Sounds like a real art collection.”

“You betcha it is, Byers.”

He closed the distance between them to kiss her. She smelled sweetly, like pomegranates. He always had a good nose for things, his mom told him.

“My shift ends in ten minutes.”

She smiled. “I’m counting on it.”

Something lazily played over the speakers as Nancy pulled a book out of her bag.

“You can go sit down in the car, you know,” Jonathan said from behind the counter.

“I know,” Nancy said, looking up from her book.

He smiled. “Okay. Suit yourself, Wheeler.”

“Thanks. I will,” she said.

The bell rang.

“Jonathan, I’m here, I know I’m late, I wanted to make sure Will was good to go out today - oh, hi, Nancy.”

“Hi, Mrs. Byers,” Nancy said, putting her book back into her bag.

"I'm good to go," Joyce said, sticking her name tag onto her shirt.
"Go, go, go."

"Are you sure, Mom? I still have eight - "

"I'm sure. Go spend some time together."

"Are you s - "

"Yeah. Yeah. Get out of here."

"Okay, Mom. Are you - "

"Go! Go, go, go, go, go, go."

He kissed her on the cheek. "Bye, Mom. Love you."

"Love you, too, Johnny."

The two teens left the store and stepped into the crisp fall air. Nancy stuck her chin a little more into her scarf as she fixed Jonathan with what she hoped was a smugly amused look.

"So...Johnny."

"Shut up. It's just a nickname."

The tips of his ears were red.

She kissed him again, taking a moment to relish in the feel of his fingers slipping into hers.

Finally he drew away, and he raised his thumb unconsciously to touch her jaw. She loved it when he did things like this. He always touched her like he loved every part of her soul.

They stayed in the moment for a little longer, breathing in and out. He laughed softly. "We should probably get in the car."

She nodded. "Yeah."

They walked a short distance to where his car was parked, only dropping hands at the last second.

A breeze through her hair just as the car door shut behind her.

Jonathan's hands were on the wheel but he hadn't started the car. He was staring straight ahead, although Nancy couldn't tell what he was looking at.

"Steve's coming back today, isn't he?"

Nancy took a deep breath in and out. "I think so."

It's not that things with Steve were still awkward - no, Nancy told herself. That's exactly what it was. Ever since Steve had left for college, they hadn't really talked. It's not like there were any hard feelings, but it was still awkward to hang out with your ex-boyfriend and your current one.

A pang of sadness hit her again. She missed Barb. Barb was dependable. She'd always been there to be not only her friend but also like the sea. Someone who'd take the burden off of your back when it just goes to be too much.

"We don't have to meet up with him today if you want," Jonathan offered.

"No, we're not going to avoid him. That'd be dumb," she said, shaking her head.

"Besides," she added. "I'm sure it'll be fine."

Joyce looked up from the sheet of paper that she was scribbling on when the bell on the front door of the shop rang.

"Hopper!"

She didn't notice her face lighting up as she grinned at him, but he did.

"Hey, Joyce," he said warmly. "Just here to pick up a few things."

"You mean frozen dinners for Thanksgiving? Hop, just come over to our place. The potatoes are always a little bit hit-and-miss, but

Jonathan and I have started getting good at making the turkey.” She fixed him with a look when he made a move to open his mouth in protest. “Think of the children, Hop.”

He shook his head in amusement. “You’ve convinced me.”

“Really?”

“Jane hasn’t ever had a real Thanksgiving before,” he said with a shrug. “Besides, it’ll be nice for her and Will to spend some time with each other that doesn’t take place in another dimension.”

“Yeah...” She said, nodding her head.

“Are you sure we won’t be intruding?”

“No! No.”

“Well, I’ve still got to grab a few things,” he said gruffly, after a few moments of silence.

“Yeah, of course! Of course.”

In her pocket, her fingers nervously twisted around the necklace that Bob had given her as a joke. It was a cheap little thing that he’d gotten the word opal stamped into.

“For your birthstone,” he’d said as he’d dangled it between his fingers. “Consider this an IOU for the real thing.”

“Aw, Bob. You didn’t have to do this for me.”

“No. None of that now, it’s your birthday! Besides, these things are supposed to bring you good luck.”

She was shaken out of her thoughts when Hopper set down a few items at the counter and she rang him up, stealing a quick look at him as he counted out the change, looking back at the register when he looked up. She handed him his receipt and she felt a small rush of...something when their hands touched.

“See you around, Joyce,” he said before he exited through the front

door.

“Bye, Hop,” she called out after him, before sighing and returning back to her paper, tongue between her teeth in concentration.

Chapter One .

“When did Steve say he was coming back?” Lucas asked.

“He said today, but he said he’s got to spend time with his *folks* today before they leave town,” Dustin said, with quotation marks around the word folks. “I don’t know, guys, I say we annoy him today anyway.”

“Absolutely not,” Lucas said in reply, rolling his eyes. “Leave him alone for one day. He’s probably sick of talking to you anyway.”

“I disagree. I think that he’s lucky that he gets to talk to me.”

“Besides, we’re gonna see him tomorrow,” Will said. “He promised us a Star Wars marathon.”

Jane’s eyebrows furrowed. “Star...Wars?”

“Yeah,” Mike said. “It’s movies about these guys in space - ”

“And they’re awesome,” Max said.

“You should come watch them with us,” Will said quietly, but with a smile.

She smiled, looking back at him. “Okay.”

In the morning, Jane slipped out of the house. They’d agreed to meet at the arcade for Steve to come and pick them up, and the rest of the Party was already inside by the time that she got there. Dustin was fighting valiantly to reclaim his top spot on a game, without much success. MADMAX sat there smugly in 1st place.

“No!”

Jane smiled. He must have lost again.

Will caught her eye first. He was laughing. Good.

“We’re burying whatever Dustin had left of his dignity today,” he said good-naturedly. “You, of course, are welcome to join.”

“Give him a break,” Mike said, rolling his eyes.

“You’re just mad that she keeps beating you,” Lucas said pleasantly.

Mike groaned.

He and Lucas argued for a good two more minutes, and Jane couldn’t tell if they were still talking about the game by the end of it.

The sound of a car engine crept up on them, Dustin’s ears perked up at the sound.

“Steve!”

The six kids huddled around the window of the arcade. It was not the classic car they were used to seeing but an old beat-up van. Probably his mom’s.

The car door opened, and out stepped Steve Harrington, with that determined-looking face that he always had on. He started to walk towards the door of the arcade.

And that’s when they realized that he wasn’t alone.

“What’s up, shitheads?” Steve casually, followed by a smirking stranger who was trying hard not to laugh.

“Steve!” Dustin said, talking the older teen.

Greetings were exchanged along with handshakes and respectful nods.

Finally Jane just said, “Who’s that?” while pointing at the person next to him.

“First of all, mind your fucking manners. You can’t just point at

people and talk about them like they're not there," he said, with only the slightest hint of fondness.

"Second of all," (here his voice became more nervous). "This is my girlfriend. Anne."

"So did you guys meet in college?"

She nodded. "He sat next to me in literature."

They were walking side-by-side on the open road. Every once in a while they hugged the trees as a car passed.

Will looked up at Anne. She'd offered to walk him home when he'd tried to slip out early. He couldn't think of a way to turn her down and so she had become his walking companion.

She was nice, and funny. When an argument had broken out amongst the Party, Steve had done his best to referee. He was met with minor success, and she had jokingly said, "Kids, listen to your mother."

She was also pretty smart. Probably not a genius, but Will didn't really care.

"Yeah, I'm excited to tell my dad about all the books that we're reading for that class," she said. "He's a professor at a college, which is kind of funny."

"Do you see him a lot?"

"Not really. I mean, it's not the same college."

"So are you going to go see him and your mom during the break?"

She paused for a long second, so much that he worried that she wasn't and that he'd somehow hurt her feelings.

"My parents aren't that big on Thanksgiving. But I'll still go see them, and Steve'll come with me."

He nodded.

She nodded back, and then smiled. "So what about you?"

"What about me?"

"Do you have any hobbies? Do you like music? Movies?"

"I like to draw."

"Nice! That's actually pretty cool. What do you like to draw?"

"Adventures."

"That's amazing! I'm not very - "

She cut herself off as the sound of an engine roared behind her and she yanked herself and Will out of the way.

The car stopped just ahead as Anne asked if he was okay - and he froze as he laid his eyes on the boots stepping out of the car onto the asphalt. Boots that belonged to none other than Billy Hargrove.

Anne followed his gaze.

"I never thought I'd see you in the woods again, fairy boy," he drawled, before switching his attention to Anne and nearly purred. "And who might you be?"

She crossed her arms. "Anne Nelson. And I'm going to have to ask you to apologize."

"Apologize for what, darlin'?"

"I think you know."

"I can't say that I do."

"I'm sure you can figure it out," she replied coolly.

"For what, calling him a fairy? Everyone knows he likes boys, the nasty little perver-"

She punched him.

It was only enough to knock him halfway over, but it was pretty solid-sounding. She did it again and then kned him in the gut.

“Next time, don’t antagonize someone whose father is a police officer,” she hissed at him. She then turned to Will, still clearly angry. “Come on, let’s go.”

She walked without waiting for him to follow. He shouted after her, “Coming!” before kneeling down.

He spoke quietly. “The Mayfield-Hargrove Act of 1986. Max is going to wreck you.”

And then he walked away, feeling incredibly light.

They reached the Byers house, and Anne was just about to leave when Will spoke.

“I thought you dad was a professor.”

She nodded. “He is.”

“He’s also a police officer?”

“No.” She shifted. “I, um, I have two dads.”

“Are you adopted?”

She breathed in and out.

“No, uh, they’re together. They’re married.”

There was a long paused, before he said, “I thought two men couldn’t get married.”

They sat on the porch, on the the two nice deck chairs his mom had saved up for and bought.

“They’re not legally married, no. But they’re my dads. And boys liking boys and men liking men isn’t a bad thing. So idiots like that

guy we saw don't have any right to say the name that he called you. And you know...I like Steve, and I like boys, but I like girls, too. so whatever happens, if you like boys, or girls, or both, or neither, or whatever - you're fine."

She was looking down at her shoes, and he smiled.

"You're pretty cool, Anne."

She snorted. "I'm glad someone thinks so."

Anne let out a sigh of relief as she put her feet up on the dash.

"Are you sure you don't want to stay in Hawkins for Thanksgiving?" She asked Steve. "I won't be mad if you say you want to."

He shrugged. "Parents going out of town. My beautiful girlfriend wants to go home for Thanksgiving. Not really much of a contest."

She blushed. "Then I guess my beautiful boyfriend better hurry up and start driving before it gets dark."

He leaned over to kiss her. "You're right, like always."

"Mmhhh."

They were out on the road soon, and Queen filtered through the radio.

"So what was it like being back?"

Steve tapped his fingers on the steering wheel. "Basically like I'd guessed. Weird, a little awkward, and infinitely better with you."

"Aha," Anne said, a smile tugging at the corner of her lips. "The kids in that town, though. You've got something special with them."

His mind flashed back to the school bus, the underground cavern, the Byers house.

"You have no idea."

The few hours that it took them to get to the Paxton-Nelson household saw Anne asleep in the passenger seat until Steve gently woke her to switch off. The lights in the driveway were a warm yellow, and Steve couldn't help noticing the grin that appeared on Anne's face.

"This is it, Stevie boy," she said. "The end of the road."

As she grabbed her bag from the backseat and confidently set down the well-kept path to the front door, Steve shook his head. The end of the road wasn't all that bad if this was it.

He followed behind Anne as she walked to the door. When she knocked on the door, there was a pause until the door was opened by a man with thinning blond hair, that had just enough red to it in a certain light, and blue eyes in a collared shirt, sweater vest, and khakis.

"Hello," he said.

"Dad, this is Steve," Anne said.

"Ah, yes, we've heard a lot about you. Come on in."

"It doesn't have to be perfect, Mom," Jonathan said.

"I *know*," Joyce said, a frown twisting her features.

"Are you sure Nancy's not coming?" She called after him when he began to walk to Will's room.

"Yeah, her mom wants her to stay and have Thanksgiving with them."

"Oh, well, that'll be nice."

"Yeah."

He knocked on Will's room, entering when he heard a muffled "Enter."

Will was sitting at his desk, drawing so frantically that Jonathan's heart nearly stopped. But as a few more seconds passed, he saw that the movements were more enthusiastic than anything.

"Hey, Kirby," Jonathan said. "It's time to help mom with dinner."

Will's head perked up. "Are Jane and Chief Hopper here yet?"

"No. But that's why we gotta help Mom, so it's all ready when they come."

"Well, duh."

Jonathan smiled. "Hurry up. I better see you in the kitchen in two minutes."

He saw his brother nod, and satisfied, he left the room.

Will finished the last panel that he was working on and leapt to his feet, barely giving the drawing a second thought as the smell of mashed potatoes propelled him down the hall.

The comic heavily featured six kids, about his age, with a girl who had magic powers, and a boy who could see into different worlds. Bob Newby, Superhero, and Joyce Byers, a formidable author/hero, teamed up together to save the world with the help of the trusty Detective Hopper. And four teenagers, one with a cloak made of a rainbow, studied by day and fought monsters by night.

And everyone was happy.